

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4382

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0754

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, AR

SUBJECT: LATEST CABINET SHAKE-UP

REF: BA 0723

1. AS EXPECTED (SEE REFTTEL) MRS. PERON ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATIONS OF ECON MIN CAFIERO AND LAB MIN RUCKAUF ON EVENING FEBRUARY 3. THEIR SUCCESSORS, EMILIO MONDELLI, NEW ECON MIN, AND MIGUEL UNAMUNO, NEW LAB MIN, ARE SCHEDULED TO BE SWORN IN AT MIDDAY FEBRUARY 4.

2. DESPITE EARLY INDICATIONS THAT NEW ECON MIN IS CLOSE TO INTERIOR MIN AREA (AND THROUGH HIM TO LASTIRI) AND THAT UNAMUNO ENJOYS CLOSE TIES WITH IMPORTANT LABOR FACTIONS, NEITHER HAS GIVEN INDICATION OF WHAT IF ANY NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS THEY INTEND TO IMPLEMENT. SOME REPORTS INDICATE DELAY IN ANNOUNCING RESIGNATIONS AND REPLACEMENTS RESULTED FROM CONFLICT WITH LORENZO MIGUEL AND OTHER LABOR LEADERS OVER SUCCESSOR TO CAFIERO. IF THEY WERE TO LOSE ONE ALLY, THEY OBVIOUSLY WISHED TO REPLACE HIM WITH ANOTHER. THEY THEREFORE REPORTEDLY PUSHED THEIR OWN CANDIDATE FOR THE ECONOMY MINISTRY. THEY LOST THE BATTLE, HOWEVER, AND MONDELLI WAS APPOINTED DESPITE THEIR OBJECTIONS. HENCE, EVEN THOUGH UNAMUNO HAS LABOR TIES AND MAY BE ACCEPTABLE, OUSTER OF CAFIERO AND RUCKAUF REPRESENT NET LOSS FOR LORENZO AND LABOR SECTOR GENERALLY.

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3. FIRST REACTION OF PRESS HAS BEEN VERY UNENTHUSIASTIC, TO SAY THE LEAST. NONE OF THE HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS AROUSED BY CAFIERO'S APPOINTMENT GREETED ANNOUNCEMENT OF MONDELLI'S SUCCESSION TO ECON POST. IN PART, THIS IS REFLECTION OF FACT MONDELLI NOT NATIONAL POLITICAL FIGURE AS CAFIERO IS. HOWEVER, HO-HUM REACTION ALSO REFLECTS WIDESPREAD ATTITUDE OF MOST OBSERVERS THAT SIXTH ECON MIN IN 2 1/2 YEARS NO MORE LIKELY TO RESOLVE ECONOMIC CRISIS THAN HIS PREDECESSORS.

4. BIO INFORMATION FOLLOWS:

EMILIO MONDELLI - A 61-YEAR OLD BANKING EXECUTIVE, MONDELLI HAS SINCE 1941 HELD A SERIES OF KEY POSITIONS IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BANKS IN ARGENTINA. SINCE AUGUST OF 1975 HE HAS BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL BANK. AS BANK PRESIDENT HE RECENTLY REPRESENTED ARGENTINA AT THE IMF MEETING IN JAMAICA.

MIGUEL UNAMUNO - A LONG-TIME PERONIST MILITANT, UNAMUNO, WHO UNTIL YESTERDAY WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE BUENOS AIRES CITY COUNCIL, HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE IN LABOR ACTIVITIES. HE WAS A ONE-TIME SUB-SECRETARY OF THE BANK WORKERS UNION AND A BOARD MEMBER OF THE CGT'S EXECUTIVE ARM, THE CCC. HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE TRAVELED ABROAD ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO ATTEND CONFERENCES AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINE LABOR.
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